

Senator Moore, Senator Luxenberg & Distinguished Members of the Housing Committee:

I am writing today in **OPPOSITION** of HB-6633 – AN ACT CONCERNING A NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND FAIR SHARE PLANS FOR MUNICIPALITIES TO INCREASE AFFORDABLE HOUSING, which will impose overreaching and punitive penalties on municipalities and undermine existing efforts to address affordable housing that communities are attempting to address. HB-6633 is simply adversarial and punitive. Let us put forth legislation that truly evaluates affordable housing needs and includes local municipalities in the discussion.

Advancing affordable housing is a laudable goal. We need to work TOGETHER to understand the need and a plan. Sadly, HB-6633 does just the opposite. It serves as a blank check for predatory developers to sidestep local planning and zoning committees in the pursuit of profits disguised as altruistic development. These “predatory” developers use their own stick and carrot by utilizing 8-30g to threaten the development of enormous projects with affordable housing and then “caving” to smaller market rate only developments so that they truly financially benefit. We have seen this in Greenwich.

Why does this happen? Because building is expensive and towns do not have the funds to build affordable housing when they want and are committed to do so.

Let me give you an example of what “Fair Share” would cost the Town of Greenwich if imposed:
For background:

Greenwich's annual operating budget for FY'22-'23 is approximately \$465 MM dollars.

Greenwich's total housing stock per OCA = 21,053 units

Greenwich's "Fair Share" affordable housing allocation per OCA = 3,304 units

Mandated time to build this additional 3,304 units = 10 years

If Greenwich were to choose Option #1 and build out 3,404 units of affordable housing stock, and if one estimates the cost of building each affordable unit at \$450k/unit, the overall expenditure which would be funded solely through tax revenues would total an astounding \$1,486,800 billion dollars over ten-years. That is more than three times the town's current annual budget.

If option #2 is chosen and developers do the building of affordable housing at 20% this would increase the housing stock in Greenwich by approximately 17,000 additional units. That would nearly DOUBLE the current housing stock in the town. The infrastructure simply can't handle this.

We need to think about the unintended consequences and costs associated with the “doubling” and in some cases “tripling” the amount of housing stock to meet an arbitrary “Fair Share” calculation of need that simply DOES NOT MAKE SENSE. HB-6633 does not take into account the real impact on communities including real infrastructure and environmental blows to municipalities. This is not good legislation.

Those of us who strongly support local zoning control, also support adding affordable housing options in accordance with what actually works for each individual local community. Why are we even entertaining HB-6633 To increase the tax base in municipalities with high grand list values or median income?

Let us write a bill that does a true evaluation of affordable housing needs. Not a bill that is based on a set of arbitrary requirements that seem quite punitive and adversarial.

How about we look at reasonable State funding mechanisms that will incentivize municipalities to build more affordable housing without the input of predatory developers.

We also need to do better for those who are in need of affordable housing. We need to understand the cost of living, whether there are jobs. It is not just about building housing. The picture is much bigger than just "if we build it they will come."

Thank you,
Tara Restieri
Greenwich, Connecticut